

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 DLOS-07 DRC-01 /098 W

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R 140859Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3442

INFO OXMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 7802

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMBEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR 2560

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 5641

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XC, RP

SUBJECT: GOP PLAY ON VII ASEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

REF: JAKARTA 5740

1. GOP INFLUENCED PRESS HAS GIVEN RELATIVELY HEAVY AND VERY FAVORABLE COVERAGE TO THE JUST CONCLUDED ASEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. ROMULO'S RETURN PLAYED TRIUMPHANTLY WITH REPORT GOP DEL "SCORED HEAVILY".

2. DESPITE EMBARRASSMENT AT HAVING TO BACK DOWN FROM PUBLICLY STATED AND LONG STANDING EXPECTATION OF PROVIDING SITE FOR ASEAN SECRETARIAT, GOP EVIDENTLY DECIDED TO PUT BEST FOOT FORWARD. ROMULO RELEASED DIGNIFIED IF SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUS STATEMENT EXPLAINING THAT WHILE GOP OFFER OF EXPENSIVE SITE WAS ILLUSTRATIVE OF RESPONSE OF PHILIPPINE PEOPLE TO ASEAN, PRESIDENT MARCOS HAD WITHDRAWN OFFER IN DEFERENCE TO SUHARTO'S
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WISHES AND IN INTERESTS OF RETIONAL UNITY AND HARMONY.

HE SAID GESTURE HAD BEEN GREATLY APPRECIATED.

3. ALTHOUGH WE SUSPECT FILIPINOS HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN RELATING SITE WITHDRAWAL TO DESIRE FOR INDONESIAN SUPPORT IN UPCOMING TALKS WITH SUHARTO ABOUT MALAYSIA, DFA AND MEDIA ADDITIONALLY COMPENSATED FOR RETREAT ON SITE BY EMPHASIZING SUCCESSES IN ASEAN ACCEPTANCE OF GOP PROPOSALS FOR ASEAN CHARTER (REFERRED TO STANDING COMMITTEE), FOR AN EFFECTIVE REGIONAL PROCEDURE FOR PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF INTRA-REGIONAL DISPUTES (TO BE STUDIED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS) AND FOR CONFERENCE OF SEA NATIONS TO CONSTITUTE AN ASIAN FORUM (TO BE HELD AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME).

4. DFA COMMUNIQUE CLOSED WITH STATEMENT THAT IN VIEW INDONESIANS AND FILIPINOS INSISTENCE ASEAN MINISTERS HAD AGREED TO "REMAIN IN CLOSE CONSULTATION BEFORE AND DURING THE CONFERENCE ON THE LAW OF THE SEA, WITH A VIEW TO BROADENING AREAS OF AGREEMENT".

5. COMMENT: IF GOP MIFFED AT LOSS OF SECRETARIAT SITE OR COOLNESS ASEAN RECEPTION GOP PROPOSALS (REFTEL), IT IS NOT ALLOWING IT SHOW IN PRESS. DEVELOPMENT ASEAN CONTINUES AS IMPORTANT GOP FOREIGN POLICY PRIORITY, AND TACTICAL ADVANTAGES OF GRACIOUS PERFORMANCE IN KALARTA JUST PRIOR TO MEETING BETWEEN MARCOS AND SUHARTO IS EVIDENT. GOP HAS ALREADY GIVEN EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY TO MRS. MARCOS' PILGRIMAGE TO INDONESIA AND WE ASSUME GOP WILL BE ALERT TO OTHER WAYS OF IDENTIFYING ITSELF WITH REGION AND PARTICULARLY INDONESIA AT LEAST SO LONG AS IT FACES POTENTIAL PRESSURE ON MINDANAO PROBLEM FROM ARABS AND MALAYSIA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING AGENDA, PRESS RELEASES, MINISTERIAL MEETINGS, SITE SURVEYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974MANILA05641
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740119-0055
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740550/aaaabrzi.tel
Line Count: 93
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: JAKARTA 5740
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <14 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOP PLAY ON VII ASEAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, XC, RP, ASEAN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005